



Grand Junction City Council

Regular Session

Item #3.a.i.

Meeting Date: February 21, 2018

Presented By: John Shaver, City Attorney, Rob Schoeber, Parks and Recreation Director

Department: Parks and Recreation

Submitted By: Rob Schoeber, Parks and Recreation Director

Information

SUBJECT:

An Ordinance Amending Chapter 12 of the Grand Junction Municipal Code Concerning Riverfront and Other Trail Regulations Concerning the Operation of Electrical Assisted Bicycles

RECOMMENDATION:

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board unanimously supported this ordinance revision at their April 27, 2017 meeting. Staff recommends that City Council adopt the recommendation and approve the ordinance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

City Council formally considered this item at the December 20, 2017 Regular City Council meeting and the ordinance was not adopted on second reading. Since that time, the Mayor and members of Council have requested that this item be brought back for Council discussion.

The City of Grand Junction currently maintains a trail system approximately 21 miles in length, including Riverfront, Ridges and Urban Trails. These developed hard surface trails are utilized for non-motorized activities such as walking, running and cycling. Other power driven mobility devices (OPDMDs) may be operated on any of these trails by individuals with mobility disabilities.

E-bikes, or electrical assisted bicycles, use a small electric engine to boost rider's speeds. They are popular among riders of all ages and are designed to enhance a rider's pedaling with limited engine power.

During the recent Colorado legislative session, HB 17-1151 was approved by the legislature. In summary, this bill removes electrical assisted bicycles from the definition of motorized vehicles and creates three classes of E-bikes. The three classifications are defined according to the maximum speed of the electrical power in relationship to the pedaling by the rider.

Class I Electrical Assisted Bicycle – An electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour.

Class II Electrical Assisted Bicycle – An electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance regardless of whether the rider is pedaling but ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour.

Class III Electrical Assisted Bicycle – An electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty-eight miles per hour.

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) has provided significant capital funding for trails in the Grand Valley, primarily the Riverfront Trail. In general, GOCO opposes motorized uses on all of their grant funded trails. Recently, however GOCO has stated that they view E-bikes differently than motorized uses, and are leaving these decisions up to the local communities. Policy revisions pertaining to E-bikes are currently being explored in several Colorado communities including, Loveland, Vail, Steamboat Springs, Boulder, Durango, Town of Breckenridge, and Summit County.

During a City Council workshop on June 5, 2017, this topic was discussed with members of the Riverfront Commission. The Commission stated that they continue to support the ban of motorized equipment on the Riverfront Trail, with the exception of ADA compliant devices. They also stated that while they support the ban, they would not oppose the exception of E-bikes if the City chose to allow them.

The proposed ordinance revision would continue to ban all OPDMDs on City trails with the exception of ADA approved devices, and would also exclude Class I and Class II E-bikes from the definition of motorized devices.

BACKGROUND OR DETAILED INFORMATION:

The City of Grand Junction currently restricts the use of motorized devices (with exception of ADA approved) on developed trails throughout the community. The trail system encompasses approximately 21 miles of hard surface trails in the Ridges, along the Riverfront and throughout subdivisions and parks.

Electrical assist bicycles are battery powered devices that can be operated either by power or pedaling. Depending upon the battery packs, E-bikes can range in speeds from 12 to 28 miles per hour. Earlier in 2017, the Colorado Legislature adopted House Bill 17-1151. This bill excludes E-bikes from the traditional definition of motorized devices, and defines them into three different categories according to maximum speed of the electrical power in relationship to pedaling by the rider. The classifications are as follows:

Class I Electrical Assisted Bicycle – An electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour.

Class II Electrical Assisted Bicycle – An electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance regardless of whether the rider is pedaling but ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty miles per hour.

Class III Electrical Assisted Bicycle – An electrical assisted bicycle equipped with a motor that provides assistance only when the rider is pedaling and that ceases to provide assistance when the bicycle reaches a speed of twenty-eight miles per hour.

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) has provided on-going grants for the development of the Riverfront Trail. This funding is contingent upon the trails being utilized for non-motorized uses only. In recognition of HB 17-1511 however, GOCO has recently stated that local governments should develop policies that best fit their communities, and would support the allowance of E-bikes on GOCO funded trails.

The Riverfront Commission is made up of 11 members that are appointed by the City of Grand Junction, Town of Palisade, Mesa County and City of Fruita. In a letter dated September, 2016, the Commission expressed their concern about the use E-bikes on the Riverfront Trail and recommended the continued ban of all motorized devices on the trail (with the exception of ADA compliant devices). City Manager Greg Caton responded to their recommendation through a letter dated April, 2017, and encouraged the Commission to further study and evaluate the use of E-bikes on the trails. He cited several Colorado Communities who either allow their use or are exploring their uses on public trails. Several members of the Riverfront Commission attended a City Council workshop on June 5, 2017. They continued to support a full ban on motorized devices on the Riverfront Trail, however indicated that they would not oppose an exception for E-bikes if any of the local entities chose to allow exclude them from the ban.

The City of Grand Junction maintains a portion of the Riverfront Trail through an Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Fruita, Town of Palisade, Mesa County and Colorado State Parks. Currently, the State is drafting a similar exception for Class I and Class II E-bikes, and the Town of Palisade continues to support the full ban.

The proposed ordinance revision would allow the use of Class I and Class II E-bikes on City trails. Class III E-bikes would be permitted on City streets.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Appropriate signage would be installed by Parks Department (estimate: \$300).

SUGGESTED MOTION:

I move to adopt/deny Ordinance No. 4785 - An ordinance amending Chapter 12 of the Grand Junction Municipal Code concerning Riverfront and other trail regulations concerning the operations of electrical assisted bicycles on final passage and order final publication in pamphlet form.

Attachments

1. Trails Map
2. House Bill 17 - 1151
3. Riverfront Commission Letter 9-20-16
4. City Manager Letter 4-20-17
5. Ordinance E Bikes
6. Trail Mileage
7. Urban Trails Map
8. Riverfront Trails Map
9. Ridges Map